

Dear FCC:

As someone who has worked in both print media and radio and as a citizen in general, I'm very concerned about the process of media consolidation in our country. As corporations and a handful of wealthy individuals gain greater control of TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, the internet and other information sources, we've been seeing hard-hitting investigative journalism, well-conceived opinions, and engaging non-news programming replaced by "infomercials", fluffy nonsense, serious stories that go untouched, political attacks without merit, and news-as-entertainment devoid of any real substance.

This must be reversed if we expect to have a viable democracy in the long term. I'm strongly in favor of breaking up the huge media conglomerates by legal force, because their existence is without doubt a violation of the intent and spirit of the antitrust laws. They have finagled themselves legal status as "persons" they do not deserve, a status that seriously jeopardizes the Constitutional protections actual human beings have to free speech.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of this problem. With their ability to reach about a quarter of US households, they have an even bigger responsibility than many companies to present a balanced viewpoint, but are instead working to distort the election to their own benefit. We cannot afford to have any corporation manipulating OUR elections in such a way.

Some may say that controlling corporations is limiting free speech, but that's not true. The owners of those corps have just as much right to speak out as I do... but the fact that they have a multi-billion dollar broadcasting system with which to do so makes the playing field grossly unequal. In effect, it gives them the ability to drown out opposing views by speaking once as a person and many times as a corporation. It is the government's duty -- even its major reason for existence -- to be the equalizing factor; that is why we identify our government as one "of, by, and for THE PEOPLE."

It is time the FCC stood up and started demanding real accountability from these companies, including being willing to disband them. That is the only way to ensure our airwaves revert to being PUBLIC property and our elections truly represent the will of the PEOPLE.

Thank you.